

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-234

OUTCOME: 12 - Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: 19AB

Type of Question: Hansard Page 124, 5 June 2013

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

What is the breakdown of applications by ASGC-RA:

- a) How many were successful?
- b) How many were unsuccessful?
- c) What was the most cited reason for exemption applications?

Answer:

- a) An application for an exemption under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act) is successful if the medical practitioner is granted the exemption and a Medicare provider number. As at 30 April 2013, there were 13,355 active section 19AB(3) exemptions that are held by 9,708 individual medical practitioners across Australia. These active exemptions are broken down by state and territory and remoteness classification under the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC-RA) in the following table.

Table: Current section 19AB exemptions as at 30 April 2013 (last available figures for ASGC-RA)

Number of section 19AB(3) granted by state and territory and ASGC-RA category as at 30 April 2013					
State	RA1	RA2	RA3	RA4	RA5
QLD	1491	1122	705	246	143
NSW	1455	1146	406	67	16
VIC	1594	950	309	13	N/A
WA	820	286	246	187	151
SA	571	163	234	46	31
TAS	N/A*	259	168	35	15
NT	N/A	N/A	131	99	69
ACT	181	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	6,112	3,926	2,199	693	425

* No regions with state or territory that fall within this ASGC-RA classification.

- b) For the period 1 July 2012 to 30 April 2013 there were 461 unsuccessful section 19AB exemption applications. The Department of Health and Ageing does not collect data relating to the number of unsuccessful section 19AB exemptions by ASGC-RA classification. This data is not collected as:
- unlike districts of workforce shortage, the remoteness classifications under the ASGC-RA are not a key consideration for the Department when assessing the majority of section 19AB exemption applications;
 - the Department has never used the ASGC-RA classification of a local area as a reason for declining a medical practitioner's section 19AB(3) exemption application; and
 - unsuccessful exemption applications are not captured within the Medicare billing statistics, which are used to provide information on the number of section 19AB exemptions that have been granted across Australia and by remoteness classifications under the ASGC-RA.
- c) The most cited reason for applying for a section 19AB exemption is that the applicant medical practitioner wished to obtain a Medicare provider number for the nominated practice location.